



AGRO-BASED OCCUPATIONS IN KAKATIYAS

Sadanadam A.

MA. BED., YRM Degree College, Kalwakuthy, Nagarkarnool, Telangana State - 509324.

Kakatiya dynasty despite hardship contributed for keeping to Scio-economic and culture development in this region. Agriculture had been the principal occupation of the bulk of the population in Medieval Andhra Desa, this process is (900-1323 A.D.) as at present. The entire economic life of the people revolved around it. Kakatiyas evinced keen interest in the well being of their subjects as can be seen from the hundreds of then inscriptions. For the development of agriculture, they improved irrigational facilities constructing new villages and gave tax concessions. The people also supported their efforts whole heartedly. Inscriptions show how the members of ruling families, nobles, affluent individuals, merchant guilds and soldiers by their grants of lands to temples and Brahmins helped the formation of *agrahZiras* and new Villages, construction of irrigational works such as tanks, canals, wells, etc and thus promoted agriculture. Tillers of the soil constituted the real wealth of men power of the country. All types of grants served as an incentive for intense promotion of agriculture by raising a large variety of crops.

Inscriptions and literature shed welcome light on different kinds of crops grown in lands during the period under study. *SiddhVdwaha*, an inscription of *Kavya* by Njrsimhakavi refers¹ to the crops of the Kakatiya kingdom. Thus entire country (seems to be) covered by a blue raiment because of the spreading of the (sheen of the) crops in the fields. These crops can be divided into three classes.

1. Wet crops
2. Dry crops and
3. Garden crops

Wet crops:

Paddy and sugar cane were considered as the important wet crops. Rice, being the staple food of the people was the principal crop grown on a large scale and a number of inscriptions referred to a variety of paddy crops. The coastal Andhra region was specialized in abundant rice cultivation, largely because of the fertility of the soil and the irrigation facilities available in the area. The Telangana area especially the area around Warangal was famous for the production of a superior quality of sweet smelled rice. *Rajarialu* was the super quality variety in paddy. Palkuri Somanatha describes in his *Basavapuramamu*², *Rajdnahi* rice was grown and harvested within a couple of months³. During this period, this was considered as the best and the costliest of the paddy varieties. *Vedurubiyam*⁴ which was a forest variety was also a rare and costlier, consumed by the well to do families in the society. They were supplied by the tribals in lieu of the other commodities they needed. *Vrihi*, *Kodrava*, *Salt*, *Prasangi*, *KUrra*, etc. are among the other varieties of paddy grown in different areas⁵. *Siddhodwaha*, an incomplete *Kavya* by *tfisimha Kavi* found on the hillock at *Urusu* (Warangal district) describes the lands of *Andhranagari* as golden in colour with ripened paddy fields looking like the meru mount of gold⁶. In the region of Mallisima, a special variety of paddy known as Chitti mutyalu and Kakirekkalu were grown.

Sugarcane was an important economic crop during this period. It was grown widely in the Godavari and the Krishna regions. Jaggery was the chief item prepared from it. Many references can be seen in the inscriptions and literary works to the extensive usage of sugarcandy in the temples.

Dry crops:

Dry crops may be divided into four classes;

- 1) *Grains*: Wheat, millet, Ragi, Sajja, Barley, Jowear and Korra.
- 2) *Pulses*: black gram, green gram, redgram and horse gram.
- 3) *Oil seeds*: Sesamum seeds, castor, kusuma, mustard and gingelly.
- 4) *Fibres*: cotton and hemp

Cotton was the most important fiber that was produced in Andhradesa from times immemorial. Handloom industry which is basically dependent on cotton was in a flourishing condition. It was cultivated in *Regadi-bhumi*⁷ largely in the Palanadu

and the Telangana regions. One of the inscriptions from Kammappalli belonging to the time of Kakatiya Ganapatideva records the gift of some Regadibhumi by the royal preceptor⁸. Hemp was also cultivated on dry lands as mixed crop with *Millet* and *Sajja*. As it was used as a fibre to prepare package bags, ropes, etc., were very essential both in domestic and agricultural purposes⁹. It was may mentioned sown by hand obviously after ploughing the fields.

The same system of cultivation must have been in vogue in Kakatiya period. Of all dry crops, millet, *Sajja*, *Ragi*, jowar were the most important.

Millet appears to have been cultivated on a large scale and formed the staple food of the people. Similarly the Telugu poet Nannechoda¹⁰ in his *Kumarasambhavam* to the obligation of a soldier to his master for having received a grain.

Garden crops:

Garden crops may be classified under three categories (1) Vegetable gardens, (2) Betel leaf gardens and (3) fruit and flower gardens.

- (1) **Vegetable gardens**: No specific mention of vegetable garden is made in the available sources¹¹. Inscriptions and literature mention that vegetables such as beans, brinjal, garlic, onions, vegetable bulbous roots like turmeric, kahda, pendalamu, cama, etc.
- (2) **Betel leaf gardens**: The chewing of betel leaf was a very common custom among the people¹². Records and contemporary literature are replace with references to betel chewing and this item had been given a place of importance in the paraphernalia or royalty. In the Kakatiya kingdom many of the regions produced large quantities of betel leaf. Three varieties of betel leaf namely pale, kari and ekvattige were produced.
- (3) **Fruit and flower gardens**: Kakatiya kingdom was well known for its fruit and flower gardens.

1. **Fruit gardens**: In this type of gardens various kinds of fruits such as bananas, date fruits, mangoes, oranges, jackfruits, guava, grapes and lime, areanuts, coconuts and sapodilla, etc. Were grown some of the inscriptions and literary sources mention the area nut garden granted to the temples for the ariga-rariga-bhogas¹³.

Mango, tamarind, orange, banana, lime and other kinds of fruits were cultivated in the all regions of Kakatiya kingdom¹⁴. In the Godisala village (upperapally) inscription of Kakati Ganapati states that the mango, tamarind, banana, gardens granted to godisala god Ganesa goddess Durga and god Hari for *ariga-ranga-bhogas*¹⁵. The inscriptions of Moripirala¹⁶, Pammi villages etc. also record the grants of gardens to the temples for rearing flowers, betel leaves and herbs.

2. **Flower Garden**: In these gardens, various flowers such as *Malle*, *tilaka*, *japa*, *commila*, *milligtonia*, *chftmpaka*, *jaji*, *Mandara*, *parijatha*, *molla*, *ponna*, *kalava*, *Tamara* etc., were grown in Kakatiya country¹⁷. Flower gardens also were granted by the people to temples village inscription mention that a foot - soldier (name is not clear) granted the flower garden to Sagu Siddhesvara, one of the Inugurti village inscriptions register the grant of a garden to the temple.

The agricultural products were partly consumed locally and the surplus was marketed in the fairs and urban markets. The industries of the period who almost agro-based and these products gained good local as well as export market. The Mattewada inscription of Ganapatideva refers to the agricultural as well as agro-based industrial products which formed part of the articles of merchandise. The Motupalli inscription also gives information regarding this and those taxes imposed on those articles of trade.

The following agricultural and industrial products of income trade find frequent mention in contemporary records. The pulses like green gram, black gram, *anumulu*, oil seeds like Sesamum, mustered, castor, etc, spices like black-pepper,

ginger, turmeric, etc. which were produced by the farmers were sold directly to the traders or mill-owners, who further processed and marketed them.

Fruits and vegetables were cheaper due to low rate of taxation on perishable products. A variety of fruits like mangoes, jacks, plantains, coconuts, *madiphala*¹⁸ etc., can be seen being frequently referred in the inscriptions. The popular vegetables of the period were brinjal, snakegourd, pumpkin, wood-apple, tamarind, bitter-gourd etc. The bulbous roots like Kanda, Cama, etc. were mentioned in the inscriptions of the period¹⁹. Betel leaves and nuts were popular in the usage. Cotton, indigo and sugarcane were extensively grown and supplied to the industries. These were the commercial crops which brought wealth to the state and society.

Thus it is clear that the occupation of cultivation played a major role in making the Andhra country green with a variety of crops and garden products. Its role in the economy of the state and society is very high and a major share in the revenue of the state was from the taxation on agriculture and horticulture. As industries were also agro based, the occupation of cultivation received greater attention and it was much profitable. The government also encouraged this occupation by following a liberal taxation policy which did not hurt the farmer and every care was taken to provide irrigation facilities and marketing opportunities to their products. Farmers were free to sell their products either to the royal traders or in the open market at their locality. As foreign trade was encouraged and protection was extended to the trader by the government, farmers gained reasonable profits to their products and were in a position to participate in the public welfare and philanthropic activities.

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